

# CHRISTIANITY and CRISIS

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## Diplomatic Stocktaking on the Campaign Battleground

Something has gone wrong with American foreign policy at a moment in history when serious stocktaking is painfully difficult. The collapse of Summit talks, the withdrawal of Premier Kishi's invitation to President Eisenhower to visit Japan, and the President's mixed reception in Okinawa are blows to American prestige that must be taken seriously. Yet this melancholy succession of events occurs on the eve of a Presidential campaign, when neither major American political party can afford to deal objectively with the real issues.

On one side, the Democratic opposition is caught on the horns of a dilemma. If it wishes to make political capital from the misfortunes of the Eisenhower administration, it suffers from divided counsel on tactics exemplified in the differences between Congressional leaders like Senator Lyndon B. Johnson and the Democratic Advisory Council. An all-out attack could backfire if Republican leaders like Senator Everett Dirksen and Vice President Richard Nixon were to succeed in demonstrating that Democrats were "soft on Communism." Yet to accept the tactics of a more limited criticism of Republican foreign policy calling for modifications in timing or diplomatic methods is unlikely to afford the Democrats much political mileage. Similarly, moderate and informed Republican leaders like Governor Nelson Rockefeller who might wish to subject present policies to self-criticism and re-examination can scarcely expect a fair hearing when their party is preparing for an all-out political struggle.

The exigencies of practical politics, however, are no excuse for private citizens or informed observers to scurry for the safety of an intellectual foxhole.

If political leaders feel constrained to measure proposals solely in electoral terms, the signs point to a growing awareness both in official and unofficial quarters that responsible men must take stock if we are to avoid a series of crises leading to eventual catastrophe. Fortunately, Secretary of State Herter reflected this view in his appearance on June 21 before a Senate appropriations subcommittee. He explained under questioning that the Administration was contemplating "that increased emphasis should now be placed upon traditional channels of international contact, rather than on more informal methods."

Official visits by a popular President timed to coincide with clearcut, affirmative policies can have meaning and validity. The visit to India associated with rising expectations that East-West tensions were beginning to yield to steadfast efforts by Western leaders is a case in point. The President seemed to ratify and reinforce a trend of events that the whole of the Indian people were able to comprehend and support.

The more recent visits, following the breakdown of Summit negotiations for which the rest of the world perhaps unjustly holds us partly accountable, were seen, however, in a different light. The President's itinerary—as Asian critics were prompt to point out—was drawn up primarily from military outposts in Japan, Okinawa, Formosa and Korea. American policy played into the hands not only of the Communists but also Asian neutralists, including Socialist, trade union and student groups in Japan. These elements pointed to American conduct during the ill-fated U-2 episode and succeeded in exploiting resentments that have been accumu-

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lating over the past 15 years. One measure of the extent of Japanese national feeling is the relative silence during the crisis of the majority in Japan supporting the new security treaty.

The fundamental point to be grasped is that state visits, like Summit diplomacy, are a serious business for which proper timing and preparation are essential. *The Economist* (London) editorialized on June 18, 1960: "The taste for trivial peregrination that Mr. Eisenhower has been prone to indulge has only the most tenuous connection with diplomacy. . . . Too much of the applause he has picked up in the past six months has not been worth the having."

This much seems clear, that state visits in which the prestige of the Presidency is thrown into the balance must be planned with great prudence and restraint. Seldom if ever can the Executive of another state shore up a faltering regime, particularly when the Executive is so plainly a party at interest. In Walter Lippmann's words: "A state visit . . . should never be made to a country which is divided within itself on an issue in which the visiting head of state has a special interest."

The fate of a great nation must be worked out by those who are its responsibly chosen officials. Nations on the boundaries of the Soviet Union and China were shaken and frightened by Soviet threats against the continued use of allied bases for overflights of Russian territory. Positive neutralism undoubtedly gained ground in Asia even from the standpoint of policies for military security. In this setting the President's Asian visit lost some of its earlier symbolism, for he came not from a visit to Moscow, having advanced the cause of peace, but from Washington to support a military pact. Moreover, he was to arrive at a moment when many Japanese were calling into question defensive arrangements as such. This was a moment not for public display but tactful, firm efforts at other levels.

The recent chain of events suggests that the first need is for sober stocktaking of concepts of diplomacy, the link between political, military and diplomatic actions, sound judgments of the always baffling trend of events within another country, and reconsideration of the question whether our own Government is properly organized for the conduct of its foreign affairs. If we allow the pressure of the moment, national pride or personal vanity to dull the sense of urgency that surrounds these basic issues, one pro-American foreign edi-

torialist may prove right in his prediction: "The crisis is only beginning."  
K. W. T.

## THE EICHMANN CASE

WHEN ISRAELI volunteer agents located Adolf Eichman, living behind an alias in Argentina, and spirited him away to Israel, the world was impressed again with the viciousness of Nazi crimes and the relentless pursuit of justice. He is charged with the extermination of six million Central European Jews during the days of Nazi power.

Deeply sympathetic with the emotions that this man stirs in the heart of Israel, and in no way to suggest that justice not be done, we do raise questions about the way that official Israel has chosen to press the Eichmann case. Our dissent focuses on the abduction and the assumptions underlying Israel's claim of jurisdiction.

Eichmann's crimes were not against the Jewish state. Even if we were to assume that they were crimes against the Jewish people, there are doubts about Israel's assuming legal protection for the whole Jewish people. Eichmann's crimes were against humanity, against the basic laws of mankind. Israel's exclusive claim in this case interprets too narrowly the enormity of the Nazi offense. Genocide is a crime against all, not only the victim.

It could be argued that Argentina should have tried this man to whom it had given asylum. Logic points to his being tried in German courts. It has been suggested that an *ad hoc* international tribunal, similar to the Nuremberg courts, be convened to hear the case of Humanity v. Eichmann.

Who shall be the arm of justice in this case? We propose that the World Court decide the venue. Then whatever tribunal hears the case, even if Israeli courts were so appointed, the trial would vindicate moral laws that compel us all.

R. T. B.

## KHRUSHCHEV'S RUMANIAN RHAPSODY

LESS THAN a month after Mr. Krushchev torpedoed the Summit conference, he has elaborated a new and significant deviation from the "Marxist-Leninist" line of orthodoxy. The occasion was the meeting of the Party congress in Rumania. His deviation may prove more significant than what he did in Paris.

"We cannot mechanically repeat what Lenin said on imperialism," the Russian boss declared. "We cannot go on asserting that imperialist wars are inevitable until socialism triumphs throughout the world." The gist of his message was that socialism would triumph without a war and that war under present conditions would be "suicidal."

This bold defiance of a mechanical Communist orthodoxy proves that the Russian leadership is as aware as we are of the impossibility of nuclear warfare. It reveals that Khrushchev is strong enough to defy the sacred scriptures and that his strength is probably derived from the Russian people's fear of another war.

The address, which was seconded by the European Communist satellites, was a direct challenge to the true and primitive Communist believers in China. It may not herald a break with China. But the Russian Premier's speech may explain Chinese pressures to torpedo the Summit meeting, and may also guarantee his supremacy as the authoritative expounder of a new Marxist orthodoxy. It is a boon to all that this orthodoxy is strongly impregnated by a pragmatic regard for the facts of history that both Communists and non-Communists must face.

Khrushchev's new orthodoxy will not make an accord with Russia on either armaments or Ger-

many easier. He will continue to exploit every weakness in our political and spiritual defenses. But it will strengthen him in playing the role of the "peace-loving" leader of the Communist cause. The new line does not solve any of the immediate problems of the Cold War; it may increase many of them. Nor will it prevent a war by miscalculation or misadventure.

The Russian boss is a shrewd and unscrupulous politician whose virtuosity is not matched anywhere in the Western world. One secret of his virtuosity is his flexibility. It is good to know that we are not dealing with the madman pictured in the disillusion after the Summit. He may have found it necessary to wreck the Summit meeting as a prelude to announcing a bolder line on "co-existence," to humiliate Eisenhower in order to defy Mao. We must wait to assess the true import of Mr. K's gyrations.

If we are tempted to underestimate Mr. K's achievement in challenging or amending Leninist orthodoxy, we might remember that it required more than a century for this nation to extricate itself from George Washington's rather casual warning against "entangling alliances," a warning relevant to his day but not to a period of America's power and responsibility.

R. N.

## Red China: Challenge to U.S. Policy

DAVID M. STOWE

ON THE NINETIETH anniversary of Lenin's birthday last April, the Peking press carried an article arguing that a third world war would result in several hundred million more people turning to socialism and that the whole structure of imperialism would then collapse. In June, Liu Chang-sheng, member of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, made a speech condemning current disarmament proposals and adding: "Only when the socialist revolution is victorious throughout the world can there be a world free from war."

This makes China, with the largest population and the largest army in the world, the only significant nation that publicly welcomes world war. This is one dimension of the problem of Communist China.

The other dimension is implicit in the nature

of Communist society itself. I have never quite recovered from the shock of reading George Orwell's *1984* soon after leaving Peking in 1950. At the time, this book smashed into my consciousness with the force of a prophecy fulfilled. Red China seemed to confirm the novelist's prevision of the way in which a whole population might be bound and broken on the wheel of a totalitarian regime, not only physically but also spiritually.

All of which lends a terrible timeliness to the splendidly balanced and heavily documented book by A. Doak Barnett, *Communist China and Asia: Challenge to American Policy* (Harper, 1960). Born in China of a family prominent in YMCA work, Barnett has spent most of his time since 1947 in an intensive study of that country, was in Peking when the Communists came to power and for seven months afterward, and has traveled widely over Asia from Japan to India. An expert study group at the Council for Foreign Relations, which sponsored the book, helped Barnett in its preparation.

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The author devotes nearly 400 of his 560 pages to a careful appraisal of the Chinese Communist foreign policy, particularly its growing impact on Asia. But he begins, as is necessary, with an excellent summary analysis and description of Chinese society itself. Unlike many old China hands, Barnett has no doubts—or should we say illusions?—about the degree of effectiveness that the Reds have achieved in ten short years. “Through both organization and indoctrination, the Chinese Communists have demonstrated a startling power to control enormous masses of people—a power which seems almost to add a new dimension to traditional concepts of political power” (p. 20).

From one perspective this seems primarily a triumph of organizational skill.

Practically every distinguishable occupational, economic, or social group in China has been organized, and virtually everyone has been brought into some type of party-controlled organization. . . . The entire urban population is organized into small residents' units under police supervision. The rural population was organized first into various types of collective groups, and then in 1958 it was herded into the new communes. An effective system of mutual surveillance and anonymous denunciation encompasses virtually everyone in Communist China, and the all-pervasive web of political organization creates an atmosphere in which ordinary people feel themselves to be under constant scrutiny by the political authorities (p. 19).

### A Spirit Shapes and Pervades

But behind and underneath this organization is a spirit that shapes and pervades the life of China. Five phrases (four of them out of Chinese newspapers in recent months) may convey something of its quality.

*“Anything can grow out of the barrel of a gun”* (Mao Tse-tung, 1938). Ever-present in China, and wherever Communist Chinese influence extends, there is the quiet threat of instant readiness to use whatever degree of violence may be required. Underlying the calm amid which the Reds took control of China's cities in 1949 was a keen awareness in everyone's mind that these exemplary troops and their leaders had been and still were capable of utter ruthlessness in dealing with opposition. But immediately that threat was supplemented by as intense a campaign of persuasion as the world has ever seen.

*“The manure no longer smells”* (city girl's comment after experience on a farm). Nothing less than

a complete transformation of values and preferences is acceptable to China's masters. Through constant *hsüeh-hsi* (literally “study,” but more accurately “brain-washing”), and through actual experience of “labor,” people are led to inward identification with the role the State plans for them. In this example, city girls from cultured homes were plunged into the thick of village life. Gathering, carrying and distributing the night-soil with which the fields are fertilized was emphasized. Sweating under these stinking loads became a symbol of unity with the messianic class, the peasants and workers; the stain of ordure came to be a badge of righteousness and prestige. The injunction to *kai szu-hsiang* (“change your thoughts”—or in biblical language, “repent”) had been obeyed and a new state of existence achieved.

*“Get Steeleed in the Big Furnace of Labor”* (editorial headline). A strain of titanism pervades Chinese communism. The rhetoric of newspaper reports about heroic workers overcoming impossible obstacles, achieving miracles of construction, makes the Paul Bunyan stories sound sober. Hardship, sacrifice, strain are to be accepted as a challenge, an occasion for making oneself a man (or woman) of steel, ready for any assignment. Difficulties exist only in the mind. Real workers exult in the fiercest heat of battle, whether it be military or in engineering, agriculture, industry or sports. Images of combat, the spirit of shock troops, are constantly invoked. Observers have commented on the hysterical quality of Chinese existence today, the going on raw nerve and inflamed imagination. (In all this the story of Babel comes irresistibly to mind.)

*“Let politics take command”* (constant refrain in the Chinese press). Neither tradition nor experience, science nor common sense, but the general line and specific directives of the Communist Party are the authoritative guide in all situations. What the State says *must* be done *can* be done. Political insight has a wisdom that overrides all other considerations, demands unconditional acceptance. There is a *revelatory* power in Communist doctrine, embodied in the pronouncements of the party hierarchy. As with Tertullian there is an absolute triumph of faith over reason at the core of Chinese life today.

*“Give your heart to the Party”* (slogan of nation-wide campaign). The essentially religious dimension of Chinese Communist existence shows clearly through this phrase, identical with that of Christian revivalism. In touching ceremonies groups of people actually bring large paper hearts, in-

scribed with their names, to Party functionaries, who receive these tokens of an absolute and inward commitment. The attempt to make a false or incomplete act of devotion is scored in blazing invective reminiscent of certain gospel passages about hypocrisy. Not outward conformity but the authentic and emotional submission of the spirit is the price of acceptance.

All these phrases are ways of saying that ideological—one is tempted to say theological—factors are basic to an understanding of Communist China. Sometimes it is said that China is still in the "Stalinist" phase. But with Stalin one associates an emphasis on naked power, and a cynical manipulation of structures of power in the interest of personal dictatorship. This is not characteristic of Red China. For one thing there has been almost a total absence of personal competition for power in the controlling Red group. Significantly, Mao Tse-tung is not a grimly mustachioed man of steel but a chubby image of benevolence and goodness—to all who believe.

Orwell has caught the spirit of Chinese communism precisely in naming the police apparatus in 1984 the "Ministry of Love." It is toward the final heart-felt confession, "I love Big Brother" (i.e., the People, incarnate in the Party and its symbols) that the whole apparatus of power urges the Wangs, the Changs and the Lis.

Marx is little read in China, Barnett points out, although the basic faith in an inevitable revolution coming through the dialectic of historical materialism is pure Marxism. Lenin is a more important prophet, and some Stalinist doctrines on the totalitarian organization of state power, on state-directed economic development and on such problems as national minorities are retained.

The Chinese claim to have added a "new contribution to the treasury of Marxism-Leninism" in the thought of Mao Tse-tung. Maoism has concentrated upon the problem of revolution in "colonial and semi-colonial areas," i.e., in Asia, Africa and in Latin America seen as under the imperialist domination of the United States. These include (as Barnett lists them): the idea of a two-stage revolution leading from a bourgeois-democratic stage to a socialist stage, the concept of "new democracy" during a transitional period; the great emphasis upon the need for mass peasant support under Communist and proletarian leadership; the necessity for the broadest type of anti-imperialist front including even patriotic capitalists; and the need to build a revolutionary army with a territorial base to conduct armed struggle.

## A Domestic Program

The basic perspective of Chinese communism has a second component along with utter faith in an inevitable revolution. This component has both a positive and negative pole. Negatively it may be called anti-Westernism. The long bitter memories of predatory actions by Western powers are intensified by even more profound resentment of the disdain, arrogance and discrimination in Western attitudes. It is an incidental irony that this anti-Westernism is focused upon the United States, probably the least predatory and in many ways least disdainful of the Western powers in point of fact. Current Chinese strategy calls for a higher priority on revolt by all underdeveloped areas against Western dominance than on instigating revolts against existing native regimes within these areas, no matter how reactionary.

The positive counterpart of anti-Westernism is the tremendous stress upon Chinese nationalism. (Pan-Asianism is a note much less forcefully struck). Historic roots of Chinese national pride and ambition go very deep. These concerns have been fundamental in the entire Chinese revolution of the past century. Communism's success in capitalizing on this feeling during the war with Japan and afterward was decisive. Two personal impressions underline this point.

First, I remember the great mass meeting held at Yenching University in 1949 to celebrate the new regime. At the climax of his impassioned address a famous theological professor shouted: "Today China has stood up!" No one could doubt that this was deeply meaningful to him.

Secondly, I am surprised by the readiness of many overseas Chinese, including those in America, to see the Peking regime in the most favorable light. This results from pride and satisfaction in the national development, international prestige and world power that the motherland has achieved.

China's burgeoning population and the shifts in government policy and doctrine that it has occasioned provide a most interesting case study in Communist ideology. When the Reds took power they immediately moved against existing programs of birth control and family limitation such as some missionary medical centers had developed. The fundamental reason was theological: "Labor creates the world." Hence any attempt to limit population on the ground that resources are limited is blasphemy against the "Creator," that is, mass labor power directed by socialist planning.

But in 1953 the first careful census in many

decades revealed a population far larger than had been expected, some 583,000,000. Soon the most intensive birth control campaign ever launched came into being. Communist cadres were exhorted to lead not only by precept but also by example! Then after a few years there came another reversal. It was discovered that the greatest asset of China is its labor power. The "great leap forward" in economic effort, beginning in 1957, involved the saturation of fields, factories and home industry with an unprecedented mass of workers. In this setting the birth control program almost vanished from sight, although Barnett affirms that it has been continued in a lower key. The official line is that for a better and healthier life individuals may find family limitation desirable, but that society can absorb constructively any number of persons. And they are coming! Official figures indicate that during 1952-57 the population increased by over eleven per cent or some 65,000,000. The implications of these figures for China's neighbors and the world are arresting.

The achievements of the regime based upon this ideology have been considerable. Certainly it has attained unprecedented success in harnessing Chinese brains and muscles to State goals. Barnett answers the much-debated question about the stability of Mao's government in words that seem unexceptionable: "The Peking regime must be viewed not only as a viable one, but also as one which enjoys a relatively strong domestic political position despite its many internal problems and tensions" (p. 35).

As a footnote of uncertain significance one must recall two events of the 1950's, however. In 1956 Mao invited free discussion with the slogan, "Let One Hundred Flowers Bloom Together, Let Diverse Schools of Thought Contend." Slowly a movement of criticism began, given momentum by student and worker strikes, and then by the Hungarian revolt. Finally Chinese intellectuals spoke out strongly about the regime, a few calling for its overthrow, the majority asking for a genuine pluralism of political organization and expression. Violent demonstrations broke out on some campuses. For one brief month in the spring of 1957 relatively free expression reigned.

Then came a violent Communist counterattack. Since the summer of 1957 pressure to conform has been stronger than ever. The lid has been clapped on with a bang. But what bubbles underneath?

The other question about Communist stability, not discussed by Barnett, is posed by the refusal of a surprising number of Chinese prisoners, taken

in the Korean war, to return home, and by the continuing pressure of refugees upon Hong Kong. Clearly there has been significant resentment of the Red regime, and it continues. That such resentment has any prospect of being translated into significant resistance is more dubious.

Whether or not the living conditions of the Chinese people have been improved is a subtle and difficult question. How does one balance the freedom of village streets from mule droppings against the pressure on pretty young women to handle night-soil? The prostitute has been rehabilitated; the intellectual prostituted. Flies and rats are exterminated, almost; and so are landlords. Tens of millions of additional youngsters are in school—learning to parrot the propaganda slogans of the regime. It is probable that certain of the most depressed classes of pre-Communist China and some groups of urban workers are more prosperous. Certainly many millions of people have been affected adversely by the economic leveling that has taken place.

Barnett's summary seems judicious:

Peking's economic program demands of the Chinese people hard work and austerity in the present for the sake of impersonal national aims and promises of deferred economic rewards at some time in the future. It is a program, characteristic of totalitarian states, which focuses on national power rather than welfare. It stands in profound contrast to the programs of democratic countries, such as India, with their emphasis on raising the people's standard of living and preserving and strengthening democratic freedoms (p. 51).

### "Two Steps Forward and One Step Back"

Whatever we think of this domestic program there is little or nothing that we can do about it. Theoretically we could aid China's development, if we wished to and if our aid were acceptable. But at present it is not. On the other hand, there is little evidence that our hostility and attempts to exert pressure have seriously impeded Chinese programs. They secure—and pay for—substantial aid of a strategic kind from Russia; and for the rest, their progress depends upon maximum use of the resources that they have in substantial quantities: human ability, coal, iron, land, water and water power, and many others.

It is rather in the area of foreign relations where we make contact with Red China for good or ill. Barnett traces the main stages through which Chi-



nese foreign policy has moved since 1949. An initial period of revolutionary and nationalistic militancy shifted with the outbreak of the Korean fighting into a full-scale effort to achieve national goals through the use of military force. Then came a gradual change in emphasis, leading up to the Bandung Conference of 1955. Here, in the name of the "five principles of peaceful co-existence" and "Asian solidarity," Peking de-emphasized military factors and overt revolutionary incitement, and initiated a major political and economic offensive of persuasion. In the past two years, however, a more militant posture has produced tensions in relations with India and Indonesia and generated apprehension among other Asian neighbors. In all this time an unvarying attitude of extreme hostility toward the United States has been reflected in relation to tensions in Korea, Taiwan and the offshore islands.

The aims that Peking has steadfastly pursued through these varying strategies of attraction, intimidation and subversion are clear: achievement of Great Power status, Asian leadership, the promotion of Communist revolution elsewhere, and the expulsion of Western influence from the Pacific. Far from being novel, these same goals (reading "Chinese culture and influence" for "Communist revolution") have characterized Chinese policy for centuries.

What makes Red China so great a problem is not simply its massive resources but the intense dynamism of its rulers. Mao Tse-tung put it in a characteristic phrase: "We take two steps forward and one step back." Flexible but implacable advance is their aim. In Barnett's words:

"Examining each new situation, Chinese Communist leaders ask themselves not only 'What now?' but also 'What next?' As they analyze a problem, they do not ask how an issue can be solved permanently but how they can exploit the existing situation to lay the best possible groundwork for future advances" (p. 71).

Faced with such competition, the United States is in a most difficult position. We think and act essentially as a *status quo* power, primarily concerned with preserving existing advantages. But in an Asia, not to speak of an entire world where whirl is king, a defensive American policy has little chance. As Barnett says, our problem is "that of assisting and helping to guide the process of change into non-Communist channels, accepting and supporting changes in certain preferred directions, rather than opposing change of any sort."

## U.S. Policy Toward Peking

What, then, should be American policy toward Red China? Actually, of chief importance is our policy toward her *neighbors*. The most significant thing we can do about the Red Chinese threat and the myth of superior Communist leadership of underdeveloped societies is to help the countries of Asia toward stability, democracy and economic growth.

As to China policy proper I can do little more than underline Barnett's findings, which are strikingly congruent with other thoughtful analyses of recent months. He suggests four possible alternatives: full accommodation to Communist China; a "liberation" policy involving all-out pressure against Peking; a policy aimed at isolating Red China and applying limited pressure against it; and a "two Chinas" policy aimed at gaining international acceptance for an independent Taiwan and a mainland China recognized in the United Nations and the United States.

Actually there is little responsible support for the first two policies, involving as they do either desertion of Taiwan and our other responsibilities in the Pacific, or extreme risk of general war. The third policy, officially described as one of "pressure and diplomatic isolation," is the one followed by the U.S. since 1950. This is vulnerable for its essentially negative character, its dangerous and futile involvement in the offshore islands, and its unsuitability in the eyes of many Asian nations and some of our allies elsewhere.

A more constructive policy would aim at maximizing opportunities for favorable contact between Red China and the free world while maintaining a proper caution in dealing with a dangerous and resourceful competitor. Here are possible steps:

- (1) Increased efforts to open channels of non-official contact, and relaxation of existing restrictions on trade;
- (2) Action to persuade Chiang Kai-shek to evacuate the offshore islands and to dissociate the United States from their defense;
- (3) Efforts to induce some of the United States' major allies to commit themselves to the defense of Taiwan, as well as to persuade more nations that neutralization of the Taiwan Strait should be an international responsibility;
- (4) Action to indicate that we acknowledge the Communist regime as in control of the mainland, but reject its claim to Taiwan;
- (5) Indication of willingness to consider formal recognition of Peking if it were willing to reciprocate.

cate while accepting at the same time the independence of Taiwan;

(6) Efforts to link the seating of Peking in the United Nations with the simultaneous admission of Taiwan as a new member conditional upon Communist China's purging itself of aggression in Korea by meeting conditions laid down by the United Nations.

Such is the excellent prescription of Mr. Barnett. To me there is one striking omission in the book, thorough and voluminous as it is. There is no mention of the Christian church or its mission in Asia. Perhaps this is an implicit judgment upon the relative insignificance of the Christian community, scarcely one per cent of the population of

Asia, and of Western missions which the Communists so quickly cleared out of China.

Yet it is surely not irrelevant that the Christian mission has had much to do with generating the revolutionary vitalities of Asia, nor that the East Asia Christian Conference symbolizes the ultimate hope of the area as well as any existing organization. These are fragmentary and ambiguous facts, of course. In the final analysis it is a question of faiths: the Communists' faith in the proletarian revolution; the Buddhists' conviction of the final irrelevance of all revolutions; or the Christian's faith that God has already decisively changed the conditions of human existence by the gift of his Spirit in Christ and in the Church.

## The Protestant Church in Red China\*

EARLE H. BALLOU

**H**OW SHALL WE assess the present situation of the Protestant churches in mainland China? How restrictive are the numerous controls that have been imposed upon church activities? Is it possible for Westerners adequately to estimate the complexities that attend the numerous and inescapable relations of the churches with the Government? What should be our attitude towards these churches?

Most of us are ill-informed about what goes on behind the Bamboo Curtain, and even those who attempt to follow the situation there would not wish to make any pretense at giving entirely satisfactory answers to these questions. Information is harder to come by now than it was at the beginning of the new regime. The near stoppage of all channels of communication is one of the most distressing aspects of the situation, and baffles all efforts to get anything like an accurate over-all picture.

One of the most surprising things about the situation is that the churches have survived with the strength and vitality they still exhibit. Such was by no means the general expectation of those who watched the slow crumbling of the pre-"liberation" structure of Chinese society. Most observers were agreed that the Communist leaders would eliminate—liquidate—the Church as a visible social institution just as soon as they had the country under their control.

In the rural areas where they had earlier gained control the Communists were concerned with social reform to a degree that might condone the educational, medical and rural reconstruction programs carried on under Christian auspices, and even welcome their continuance. For the Church as an institution, however, nothing but opposition could be anticipated. This anticipation led, as a matter of fact, to the early withdrawal of some missionaries engaged in primarily evangelistic work.

Such anxiety proved to be baseless. To be sure, Christian schools of all grades and types (except theological seminaries), hospitals, dispensaries, clinics, rural improvement centers, and church- or mission-directed social work of every description were taken over by the Government just as fast as the rapidly expanding corps of bureaucrats could absorb them—and sometimes faster. This development should not have occasioned as much surprise as it did, for any Communist regime is intentionally and essentially totalitarian.

The churches, however, at least in the larger centers, were at first left comparatively unmolested. Christian leaders, awaiting developments in understandable perturbation, were assured that the Constitution of the new Government would, and in 1954 did, "guarantee freedom of religious belief." This was comforting, but the explanation of such leniency given by men high in the Government was not. Sooner or later, they said, and the implication always was that it would not be very

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\* The omission of all names of people or places in what follows is necessary for obvious reasons.



much later, religion would be seen to be quite unnecessary in the rich and well-ordered life that would be enjoyed by all. Religious—which by Communist definition means superstitious—beliefs and practices, Christian as well as any other kind, would be sloughed off and their institutional expression would simply wither on the vine.

In the early days of Communist control some Protestant leaders were inclined to feel that considerable toleration of Christianity was being granted because of fear lest a group so relatively strong and influential, however small in numbers, become actively antagonistic to the new regime and offer effective resistance to the implementation of its plans. This may have been so, but it may also have been simply that Protestant Christianity was felt to be too insignificant to be bothered with. Measured by numbers it was. No statistics prior to the Japanese invasion of 1937 claimed a communicant membership of more than 520,000, and the highest membership ever claimed, just before the Communist takeover, was barely 750,000. That was little more than one tenth of one per cent of the probable population of the country at that time.

Whatever the reason, the Church was not liquidated, although many churches went out of business. Much depended upon the attitude of the local cadres that directed the reorganization of society. In a small community they could throw their weight around and by innumerable minor restrictions make the carrying on of any church program next to impossible. Church buildings, many of them idle much of the time, always offered the strongest kind of temptation to zealous promoters of the new order seeking space for establishing their centers of activity. And the fact that so much church property was still held in the name of the foreign missionary society that had originally purchased it further discouraged local Christians already extremely sensitive under the unrelenting barrage of anti-imperialist propaganda. This propaganda ceaselessly linked the activities of missionaries with the nefarious schemes of the governments they represented for keeping China in a state of semi-colonialism, or worse.

Tens of thousands of Christians dropped away. Often the seed of the Gospel had not taken root anyway. The motives of many for aligning themselves with the Church had been decidedly mixed. What reason is there for supposing that some of the inferior or inadequate motives that lead people in the United States to join the Church have not also been present and at times decisive in the minds

of Chinese? Now, with all prospect of economic betterment or social advancement gone, many "converts" lost whatever zeal they had.

### **The Competition to "Save China"**

It should also be kept in mind that the appeal of Christianity as a force that could "save China" had been stressed continuously for many years. John R. Mott and, perhaps even more widely and effectively, Sherwood Eddy, on repeated visits had been listened to attentively by tens of thousands of students, especially during the long and disheartening war lord period that preceded the rise of the Nationalist Party under Chiang Kai-shek. This religion had in it a power, they claimed, that could effect reform in individual lives and in society as well. It, and it alone, could so transform China that the idealistic aspirations of patriotic youth could be realized. Thousands of eager youths thus became inquirers and hundreds found their way into the Church. Furthermore the efforts of missions and churches to fulfill these promises through all the welfare programs so widely and assiduously developed had long borne witness to the congruity between what Christian leaders, whether Chinese or foreigners, had preached and what many Chinese Christians tried to practice.

Yet on the national scene year followed year of disheartening frustration. To be sure the war lords were gradually displaced, or more likely absorbed, by the Kuomintang. But the radiant morn of nationalism soon passed away, as inertia and corruption again asserted their corroding influence in high and low places. And at last the long anguish of the Japanese invasion brought with it the many "diseases of defeat" that left the nation as exhausted spiritually as it was bankrupt economically. And China had not been "saved."

Almost as soon, however, as the advancing armies of the Communists gained control of any city, things began to happen in the way of improvement that were absolutely unprecedented. Many of the goals that had gleamed from afar in the preaching of evangelists and the programs of welfare workers began to take shape before everyone's eyes. Here was a new power that actually got things done. As one longtime missionary put it, "The Christian Church has always met with opposition; now we are faced with real competition."

The fact that long-desired ends were being achieved by means of force, which Christians could never substitute for their own sole weapon of persuasion, was overlooked by many a pragmatic

Chinese. The point was that communism worked! Communism was bringing genuine national salvation. Communism gave purpose and drive to an effort for human betterment that the Christian religion could not match. The new Government was also rapidly restoring the nation to an international position of strength and prestige to which, every patriotic citizen believed, its matchless history had always entitled it. Communism was beyond a doubt the wave of the future. And many a church member, especially the younger ones, made the natural adjustment of allegiance.

Nevertheless the Church has not yet withered away. There is considerable support for the belief that it has recovered much of the numerical ground lost. One estimate is that Protestant membership, after a drop of forty per cent, is now back at about seventy-five per cent of its 1949 total. People are certainly joining the Church, and some of them are young. No over-all figures are available, but in the seepage of news contained, for example, in *Tien Feng (Heavenly Breeze)*, a thin bi-weekly and the single remaining publication with a distinct, though fading, religious cast, there are occasional references to in-gatherings, particularly at Christmas time. Such new confessions of faith must represent purity of motive and courageous conviction.

### Can the Church Survive?

At the same time one must candidly ask, how long can the churches, for the most part small, continue to survive under the steady erosion of years and the ridicule of a Government neither reactionary nor corrupt, but quite the opposite? Christians are no longer the radical, progressive, forward looking element in any community. The membership that survived the turnover is growing old, and access to youth for evangelistic purposes is forbidden. Christian home influence is breaking down under the organizational system of the communes, even granting that it could have survived the unremitting barrage of propaganda channeled through an educational system designed to inculcate uncompromising dialectical materialism. Chinese boys and girls no less than their Western contemporaries give high priority to the opinions of their teachers, even when such opinions conflict with those of the old folks at home.

Moreover, there has been a drastic reduction in the number of places of worship, in the large cities especially. In Peking, for example, they were reduced from sixty-five to four. The justification offered for this decision was a reported city-wide

Sunday morning attendance of not more than five hundred. A further tendency, wilful it would seem, to schedule all sorts of obligatory mass meetings at hours designed to interfere with worship, however church schedules might be adjusted, also contributed to a decline that is continuous if not accelerating.

Worship is practically the only Christian activity left. All direction of organized good will natural to the followers of Jesus has been taken over—usurped some would say—by an omnipresent, omniscient, if not omniscient, state. Hence it takes a good deal of faith not to fear that, while the withering process has yet to reach an advanced stage, there are hardly mistakable signs that it has begun.

### The Loyalty of Churchmen

How shall we assess those who remain loyal to the Church? It is difficult for many American Christians, prone to equate or at least confuse their religious beliefs with their faith in our type of democracy and the system of free enterprise, to view without suspicion people who also claim to be Christians but put a radically different interpretation on events and seek, or at any rate support, radically different economic and political goals. Can Chinese church members really be Christians if they go along in apparently much more than passive acquiescence with their Government's drastic remodeling of society on Marxist patterns and with vitriolic attacks upon the United States as the arch-enemy of all efforts to that end?

Perhaps it would be easier for many of us to answer this question in the affirmative if we, too, had always lived in a country whose government had never made any pretensions at being Christian. Chinese Christians have been used to living under political regimes that in many respects have been much further from the Christian ideal of conduct than is the People's Government, and little nearer in ideology—if and when such regimes have had an ideology.

We need to keep in mind that China went through a time of troubles in the past half-century that eventually plunged many of her most thoughtful citizens into such depths of despair that any change was welcomed as likely to be an improvement. The People's Government brought the change, and manifold and manifest improvement quickly followed. So long as progress appeared to be made toward the same millennial goals long sought by Christian effort, it was relatively easy to

adjust Christian thinking so that in many respects it paralleled the official line, while standing staunchly on a theistic basis and awaiting a climax dependent not solely upon human achievement. At any rate, practically all of the public pronouncements, addresses, sermons, etc., of church leaders that have been made accessible to people on this side of the world have been soundly, unmistakably and courageously outspoken in their delineation and defense of the distinctly Christian interpretation of life and duty. There is, in short, no question about the theological orthodoxy of Chinese church leaders.

We hear much about persecution. Many Christians have suffered, some of them terribly, and more than a few have lost their lives. Among these last have undoubtedly been genuine martyrs. But it is also beyond question that with a diabolical cleverness most charges have been brought against Christians not because of their religious faith but because of their involvement in capitalistic and "feudalistic" enterprises. Or even more commonly because they were friends and "running dogs" of the hated imperialistic foreigners, especially Americans.

It has thus been necessary for anybody under accusation or suspicion on this score to clear himself if he is to have any standing in the new society. For months the papers were full of statements by Christians in positions of leadership at all levels denouncing former friends who under the guise of being missionaries had come as "spies" and "exploiters" in the pay of the United States Government.

Many of the detailed charges were blatantly ludicrous. How many were made with tongue in cheek? How many were posited upon a confidence of the accuser that those who read the accusation and knew the accused would also know the charges to be false and that the accusers knew them to be false?

Yet we must also ask how many Christians, exposed to the unrelenting pressure of exceedingly clever propaganda, have eventually come to wonder whether perhaps after all there were sinister motives and hidden purposes in much that their missionary friends had done. We shall probably never know. There is considerable evidence to support each of these interpretations of the way Christians have acted under the necessity to cleanse themselves from damaging associations of the past. The basic fact is that they have repudiated human friendships and continue to do so while maintaining allegiance to the Divine Lord in whose common service such friendships were formed.

## Renewal of Contact?

An allied question would be, how easily could relationships of friendship and cooperation be restored with some of the more outspoken and vociferous supporters of the official line should the opportunity ever come? How unhappily self-conscious would either party be? How much success could be anticipated for efforts to remove some of the mountains of misunderstanding and suspicion that have piled up in Chinese minds during the past decade and more, when the official position of steadily hardening hostility towards everything relating to the West, particularly the United States, has been the only expression permitted?

Finally, from the midst of the dubieties in which we find ourselves, is there any way out?

Despite the possibility of embarrassments as indicated above, the first step must be renewal of contact, of direct communication. This is more easily said than done. It is true that a number of delegations of church leaders have visited China in the past five or six years. Those that have gone from Great Britain and from Australia have reported at some length on what they saw and the conversations that were held. Evidently, however, the value placed upon these contacts and the information gained has diminished with the passage of time. A church leader in Great Britain, whose background and present position would antecedently make him desirous of cultivating such contacts, has expressed doubt as to whether other visits are likely to be attempted in the discernible future.

The reasons for this attitude are three-fold. First, it proved next to impossible to talk with individual church leaders in private. Repeatedly it was a group whom the visitors met, and in most cases with ubiquitous and extremely attentive guides or interpreters close at hand. Evidence has accumulated that the handling of the interviews was rigged. Answers to leading questions in fields of special significance were usually evasive and many of them evidently designed to maintain the united front of the group as much as to enlighten the foreign visitors.

Secondly, one must ask how much reliance could be placed upon the accuracy of the replies. Further reflection and new facts have discounted seriously the value at first given them. In one instance, a distinguished Christian leader stated emphatically that he had never been subjected to accusation because of his foreign connections. Yet lengthy and circumstantial public reports from the mainland, describing just what the accusations had been and



something of the penance imposed following the "struggle," were at the very time of the interview in the possession of anxious Chinese friends outside the country.

Thirdly, there is a problem connected with the reporting of such visits. To paint a rosy picture of conditions would damage the cause of truth, but to present a realistic picture would at least embarrass those already under suspicion for friendship with foreign "imperialists."

Yet renewal of communication must still be the first step. Barriers of hostility, whether erected in self-protection or built upon honest acceptance of assiduously promulgated falsehood, will never be removed by an embargo on all contact with those who know the truth to be otherwise. The reasons that may once have justified our Government's opposition to travel in China have worn thin.

Meanwhile we have fallen sadly behind in the amount of reliable information we need to have. To rely upon the first-hand observations of others in dealing with one of our two major rivals is beneath our dignity as well as a continuing handicap in meeting a part, and an important part, of our world responsibility. It is ridiculous that among the continuous stream of visitors to China, many of them from countries that give no indication of according early diplomatic recognition, Americans are almost never to be found. It is hardly less ridiculous when the extremely rare citizen of the United States who does manage to slip in without the blessing of the State Department is immediately deprived of his passport on returning home.

### An Uncertain Future

This then is a summary of a situation unfortunate and disturbing in almost every respect. Our fellow Protestants in China are a tiny group, doomed to grow smaller. Yet they are courageously endeavoring to keep the faith under extremely difficult circumstances. Exclusively materialistic interpretations are being put upon motives and achievements that formerly were enlightened by spiritual insights. Christians as such are denied participa-

tion in most of the expressions of their faith that had always given vigor to the growth of Christian character and had commended their faith to unbelieving neighbors.

They are also being made, as a group, an instrument of national policy with their own acquiescence in many if not most cases, but at times with disturbing doubts about the truth of what is continuously dinned into their ears. In this connection a helpful comparison could be made with the situation of the Church in Japan during World War II and the years just preceding, with the important difference that for the Chinese Christian improvements in the domestic situation credited to his Government make much easier acceptance of its foreign policy. It is well to keep always in mind that the Communists rode into power on a great wave of resurgent nationalism.

What the future holds is shrouded in uncertainty. It is not likely that the fate of the medieval Nestorians, who at one period were a strong group in China, awaits the Protestants of the twentieth century, and even a passing reference to their mysterious demise may appear a far-fetched comparison. Yet it is worth remembering that it seems to have been the pressure of a vigorous native ideology which felt no need for the religion of a Savior that finally forced into permanent eclipse this once active Christian group, exiled from its Western springs. Our Christian comrades in China are under pressure from a no less vigorous and self-reliant ideology, but the state of exile is one that in our shrunken world need not be permanent.

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